

THE
MAGAZINE OF USEFUL KNOWLEDGE,
AND
CO-OPERATIVE MISCELLANY.

OCTOBER 30, 1830.

No. 3.] "LEARNING HAS DECLARED WAR AGAINST IGNORANCE." [Price 2d.

BRITISH ASSOCIATION FOR PROMOTING CO-
OPERATIVE KNOWLEDGE.

On Monday evening the sixth quarterly meeting of this Association was held in the theatre of the Mechanics' Institution, in Southampton buildings. Mr. W. CARPENTER, in the chair.

The chairman briefly stated the business of the meeting, and requested an impartial hearing for every speaker that might present himself to their notice in the course of the evening.

The secretary then read the minutes of the last meeting, which were confirmed.

The secretary next read the report of the committee, from which we make the following extracts.

REPORT.

Your committee, in appearing before you for the sixth time, cannot but view with the most pleasing satisfaction the progress that their principles have made since they first projected the British Association for the promotion of co-operative knowledge. At that time, there were but few societies in existence, and very few who understood those principles of which we are anxious to extend the knowledge. At the present time, however, your committee can reckon not less than from four hundred to five hundred in the United Kingdom, embracing an immense number, who, if they may not have acquired a perfect knowledge of our principles, are, for the most part convinced, that by their union, they acquire strength, and by their labour, form that pillar which supports our social fabric. Formerly, they had been led to believe, that money was the basis on which the whole was raised, and in consequence, they have depended on the rich for this necessary ingredient, and consequent support. Your committee conceive, that if opposite opinions were widely circulated, and firmly rooted in the minds of the majority of the labouring classes, the natural conclusion they would draw from such conviction would be, that as we, by our labour, produce all, we ought also to enjoy it; and instead of being, as a great number of our brethren are, paupers and dependants, soliciting the rich and idle classes of society for bread, even for a mere existence, they would make arrangements, so as to cause the fruits of their labour and industry to flow in such a channel, as would be beneficial to all classes of society, and for the future, entirely do away with the possibility of labour being bought and sold, like other commodities, to the advantage of that individual only who happens to possess the capital.

Co-operators feel fully persuaded that it is from themselves only, that they can reasonably expect redress. Events have recently shown to them, and to the world, that though a solitary voice may be lost in the breeze, the united voices of a whole people will raze to the ground the barriers of

power, and bring down the despot from his fearful height—co-operators, be ye, therefore, for the future united.

With these views and feelings, they are determined to push onward, towards the attainment of a portion of the land of which their forefathers have been so unjustly deprived—and a share in that machinery which, they are conscious, could, under social arrangements, be made one of the greatest benefactors to the human race; but which now operates like a cankerworm on the industrious.

The success of their trading and manufacturing associations affords sufficient proofs of what may be accomplished, with the following necessary precautions.

1. No one should be admitted into the association, but individuals of a good and moral character, and it would be desirable that all should be of the working classes, and that each should make the instruction of his fellow members of primary consideration.

2. They should never involve themselves in difficulties, or subject themselves to the caprice or dictation of any one, by borrowing money, as the assistance of the well disposed may be rendered by many other means.

3. They should not embark in any speculation beyond their means; experience has shown, that the most profitable means of employing their capital will be by dealing in articles of food and clothing.

4. All feelings of anger should be instantly suppressed, and all causes of irritation removed: unity and good feelings should be the aim of each.

5. Each member should act as if the success of the society depended on his individual exertions; and all, in return, should esteem the individual as a brother, worthy their imitation and love.

Your committee, without arrogating to themselves any extra degree of knowledge on the all important subject of co-operation, believe that the British Association has been mainly instrumental in the diffusion of co-operative knowledge, which has led to the formation and success of the numerous societies in town and country. Independent of their humble exertions, the warm appeals and the valuable knowledge that have appeared in the columns of the *Weekly Free-Press*, have been principally made by a warm and active member of our association, Mr. CARPENTER, the late editor, whose impartial and undeviating support, will be ever acknowledged by your committee, and they hope, by all co-operators. Nor can this committee forget the very efficient services of Mr. PARE, of Birmingham, the editor of the *Birmingham Herald*, also a member of this association, for the support he has afforded to our cause, through the medium of that cheap and useful pamphlet, as well as his indefatigable exertions, in lecturing throughout the manufacturing counties, for the realization of that equality of labour and enjoyments contemplated by that friend to the human race, Mr. Owen.

Your committee presume, they need not urge their claims to your support, as their past exertions, (with such limited means), in promoting the cause and diffusing a knowledge of the principles of co-operation, entitle them to your confidence. Indeed, their zeal has caused them to make sacrifices, and to involve themselves under responsibilities, beyond what could be expected from them as working men. They, however, can at any time publish the proceedings, when they feel warranted by the state of their finances to do so.

Your committee have to inform you, that with a view to economy, they have dispensed with the services of a paid secretary, and elected Mr. Thomas Powell to that office, on the resignation of Mr. G. R. Skene; assisting him in the performance of his duty, by dividing themselves into several sub-committees.

Of the practicability and success of the Co-operative Trading Associations, your committee cannot lay before you more important and more convincing facts than the few following, extracted from their correspondence during the last quarter, and already published in the *Weekly Free-Press*.

The Third Leicester Co-operative Association consists of sixty-one members; it has been established about eight months; they commenced trading with only £1; but as soon as they had a surplus of a few pounds, they united with another society, and purchased several sheep and an ox—and during the second quarter cleared £21, after paying every expense.

The Loughborough Association say, that at their last quarterly meeting, they were worth £260. The money subscribed by the members was only £138, consequently they had gained £122, being a profit of £1 10s. to each member, and their future prospects are still more promising.

At the anniversary of the First Kendall Association, the treasurer stated, that they possessed property to the amount of £200, £75 of which has been gained by the profits on trade, in little more than eight months; they commenced with only 6s.

The First Pimlico Association stated, in their last report, that they had ninety members; their property was worth £207 12s.; and they had cleared a sum of £32 6s. 3d. during their last quarter.

The Cooper's Co-operative Trading Association are worth £79 5s. 11d. they have received by subscriptions of 6d. per week from their members, since their commencement £25, so that they have realized a profit of £54 5s. 11d. For the first six months they had but thirteen members, but now they have thirty. They began to trade with £1, and in fifteen months they have more than trebled the sum subscribed.

The First Stepney Association are possessed of property to the amount of £281 10s. They have subscribed of this the sum of £109, so that their profits on trade have been £172 10s.

In No. 19 of the Birmingham Herald, it is stated, that the First Huddersfield Association consists of two hundred and fifty persons, two hundred of whom may be called effective members. It has been in existence little more than twelve months, and although it commenced trading with the small sum of 19s. its trading capital now amounts to £700. Many of the members are accommodated with permanent employment at good wages, and the condition of others is rapidly improving. They manufacture broadcloth, of every description, cassimeres, waistcoat pieces, stuffs, and a variety of other articles. Thus in the short space of 12 months have 200 men raised themselves from the condition of mere labourers to that of small capitalists, able to depend on themselves for a regular supply of employment, and for the necessities of life. Let the opponents of Co-operative Societies get acquainted with these facts, and blush at their ignorant conduct.

Your committee still keep open the Bazaar, where they have for sale between the hours of one and four, the following articles:—viz. silks, consisting of Gros de Naples, du cape, serge, coloured and black galoons, and handkerchiefs of various patterns—silk, cotton, and worsted stockings,—Irish and Yorkshire linens—diaper—huckaback—elastic drawers—calicoes—tambour net caps—worsted velveteens—brass curtain bands, and toast stands—steel pens—leather and steel purses—Britannia metal tea and table spoons—silver watches, gold pins and broaches—pearl buttons—gilt and leather trunks—toys, &c. &c.

Your committee take this opportunity of pressing upon their fellow Co-operators, the necessity of supporting this establishment, as it might be made with their assistance an *entrepot* for the mutual exchange of all articles manufactured by Co-operators in town and country. Under the impression that such an establishment was needed, for selling the produce of Co-operative labour, was your committee induced, at a great expence, to fit up and open this Bazaar; and they find that if the various societies would but employ their surplus capital in purchasing a few articles, such as flannels, cloths, calicoes, &c., (which all of us consume) from the manufacturing Co-operative associations, and place the goods for sale in the Bazaar, each Society, so doing

would reap a profit itself, materially assist this association in paying its expenses, and greatly benefit their brother workmen.

The receipts for the last quarter amounted to 74*l.* 2*s.* 6*d.*, and the expenditure to 66*l.* 6*s.* 4*d.*, leaving a balance in hand of 7*l.* 16*s.* 2*d.* It appeared, however, from the balance sheet of debts and credits, that the association has claims upon it, to the amount of 17*l.* 5*s.* 11*d.* beyond what they have the means of discharging.

The report having been adopted, the chairman announced the following question for discussion:—

“Machinery under competitive and co-operative arrangements.”

MR. WARDEN expressed great pleasure at that opportunity of meeting his brother co-operators, and observed that the question before them was one of great importance, and that the public in general were beginning to feel it to be such, but more especially the working classes, who had been thought to know little or nothing about machinery. There was shortly to be a meeting on Kennington Common, of the working classes, to discuss the very subject of machinery. The *Times* newspaper, one of those “best instructors” of the nation, had taken up the question, and had endeavoured by some very specious arguments to prove, that machinery was beneficial to the working classes. After pointing out the fallacy of these arguments, Mr. Warden continued—time uselessly spent was an injury to society; but if it were in our power to devise any means whereby labour could be abridged, and yet more effectually applied to our purpose so that time was saved, we could then afford in the leisure thus secured, to cultivate our moral habits and mental faculties. Following out this argument, it would be seen that machinery would, under proper regulations, prove a benefit to mankind. In his opinion, machinery was not the primary cause of the misery at present existing among the working classes. He begged they would not misunderstand him—he meant machinery abstractedly considered. The purchase of labour was in his opinion little better than slavery, and was the primary cause of all the misery to which the working classes were subject, and had laid the foundation for all the injurious effects which machinery had introduced. We saw that the working classes sold their labour to the capitalists, who had now become possessed of the power of machinery, and they alone; but if machinery could be equally available to the working classes, it would matter little about their being thrown out of employ. Under Co-operative arrangements, then, machinery would enable every one to procure wealth, and prove equally beneficial to all. For instance, in regard to printing: the *Times* newspaper, by the introduction of machinery, had thrown three-fourths of the men out of employ; but suppose those men had belonged to the proprietary of that establishment, machinery would be a benefit instead of an evil to them. (Hear.) They would have to labour only three hours a day, instead of twelve, and they would equally participate in the profits. But now fifteen men had been thrown out of employ, and for what? To get greater gains for the capitalists. Not only were these men thrown out of employ, but the price of the article they manufactured was not reduced; it remained at the same

price, now it was printed cheaper, and five men were employed where twenty were formerly paid; therefore society was not now benefitted by machinery. On the contrary, under Co-operative arrangements the introduction of machinery would have done injury to none, but would have benefitted all. Further, those men so thrown out of employ, must seek it elsewhere; they had nothing to sell but their labour; they were only human machines. (Hear, hear.) They must get employment, and in so doing, they throw out others, and so on with the rest. But a leading article in the "Times" says, "Machinery is, in the long run, beneficial to the working classes." How did the writer attempt to show this? He says, "Destroy machinery, and what follows? Why, human labour being dearer than machinery, a contraction of the markets will be produced." The writer had forgotten, or pretended to forget, that the competitor against human labour—machinery consumes nothing, but the first cost. When high prices cause a contraction of the markets, how did it originate? Were they not caused by high wages? For example, leather was at the same price as it was thirty years ago, yet the manufactured article was cheaper, because inferior labour was put upon it; namely, that of women and children. This cheap labour caused a reduction of prices. Machinery was still cheaper, and if it were destroyed, human labour would be better paid, and the working classes would be placed in a situation to consume more than when the prices were lower. Machinery, then, was not, in the long run, beneficial to the working classes. And since it was clear that under the present arrangements, where one individual was benefitted by machinery, twenty were injured, it was better even that it should be destroyed than remain under those arrangements. (Hear, hear.) He did not wish to be misunderstood; he was no advocate for destroying any persons property, (Hear.) But what was the remedy proposed for the evil by the writers in the "TIMES?" (for they admitted that it was an evil) of the excess of numbers of those who offered themselves for employment? They said, reduce wages still lower, give cheap bread, and remove the Corn Laws; so that a working man who receives ten shillings a week, when reduced to five, will be able to buy a loaf at fourpence instead of eightpence. (Hear, and applause.) Their remedy, then, was no remedy at all. They also said, if machinery were destroyed the value of articles would be lessened. Now, would not human beings exist in as great numbers as before the extermination of machinery? And there would be a greater demand for human labour, consequently the working man would be better enabled to purchase those articles. (Hear.) Such arguments, then, were most futile. They said, also, that the more wealth capitalists possess, the more funds they had to pay wages. But who were the real participators in the increase of wealth thus produced by machinery? He might be as rich as a Rothschild, but was it to be therefore said, that he would employ more of his capital than he thought necessary? It did not matter to the working man how much wealth was produced if he was not a participator in it. Of what con-

sequence was it if England were full of wealth, if the working population still wanted the necessaries of life?—He thought he had fully answered all the arguments of the supporters of the competitive system. He had been lately told by an aristocrat, that if a rail-way were established from London to Liverpool, great benefit would ensue to all the working population, because a greater number of packers and porters would be necessary. (Laughter.) But, he forgot that when he arrived at the height of consumption, he could go no further. He forgot that if he threw forty thousand men out of employ, they must press upon others, until neither employment nor wages remained. (Hear.) Machinery and its supporters would go on until they were brought to a point, which must produce an alteration, and the sooner we obtained information on the subject the better. This might be a revolting idea to those who employed machinery; but it would never be used to their permanent advantage until such a change took place. The accumulation of individual wealth would not ward off the blow. There must be an equality of liberty; and of instruction for our children and servants; there must be no aristocrats to monopolize the road to knowledge and the best clothes that could be manufactured: all must have comfortable clothing, a good education, and participate in the productions of machinery, or any other contrivance for the good of mankind; and, until this was the case, machinery would work tenfold more ruin and misery than at present existed. (Hear and great applause.) Mr. Warden concluded by moving the first resolution:—

“That, in the opinion of this meeting, the use of machinery under the competitive arrangements of society, accompanied as it now is with individual accumulation of capital, is highly injurious to the working classes, and directly inimical to the happiness of the whole population. This meeting is, further of opinion, that the use of machinery under Co-operative arrangements, accompanied with united interests and common capital, would be the means of diffusing plenty and happiness throughout the world.”

MR. FOSKETT seconded the resolution, and quoted some statement from the Co-operative Herald, respecting the population of the country, and observed that the whole working class did not amount to five millions. By an experiment on the Darlington rail-way, it was proved that a small engine would do the work of 200 horses; and in regard to the printing of newspapers by machinery, it was known that 4000 copies of the Morning Herald were printed within an hour; whereas the utmost that could be produced by manual labour, was 500. Thus making the surplus increase within one hour, 3,500; in a day, 42,000; in a month 1,260,000; in a year, 15,120,000; indeed, he might say 30,240,000, because machinery could work by night as well as day; but man required at least twelve hours of the day for rest and the renewal of his strength. Such was the *power* of machinery, which did not rest here, but might be applied to every purpose of business; and since its introduction human labour had been superceded while misery and crime had increased. In 1800, when

machinery was little employed in this country, and not at all on the continent, the working population were kept in employment, and with the wages they received were enabled to possess the necessities of life, though they could not enjoy many of its luxuries. From that period during the war, England enjoyed a superiority over every other market in the world, a great demand existed, and a spirit of commercial enterprise possessed the country. It was well known that many persons made their fortunes rapidly. The wages of the working classes rose to a great height, simply because the demand for labour was greater than the supply; but when the war ceased, the demand ceased with it; and at the same time, machinery was introduced in France, Italy, Spain, and especially in Germany, where premiums were given to those who invented new machines. Since then the supply has been greater than the demand, and the wages of the workmen have been reduced to a poor pittance, scarcely able to keep him alive. (Hear.) He had ascertained for a fact that in the month of December last, in a manufacturing district (Huddersfield) there were 13,000 hands receiving no better wages than twopence-half-penny per day, and working fourteen hours a day for it. (Cries of Shame.) If those effects were produced in Huddersfield, there was little doubt but they were felt in every part of the country. Such were some of the consequences of machinery. Again, every kind of production was limited in supply, by the demand. The manufacturer never asked how much he could supply, but how much he could sell at a profit, lest there should be an excess of supply, and thus the prices were kept up. It was notorious that the East India Company frequently caused cargoes of tea to be thrown overboard, when they feared the market would be glutted by bringing all they had bought to England. The same principle guided every merchant, manufacturer, trader, and farmer throughout the kingdom. At a time when Ireland was suffering severely, Lord Liverpool declared that the cause of it was the excess of good which the country possessed. How strange, that that plenty should be the cause of starvation and misery! He maintained that machinery could not be abolished, for then we should be unable to compete with foreign manufacturers; unless, which was not at all likely, every other country would abolish it also. And as the higher classes would never come forward to our assistance, while they could grind us down, and reduce us to mere beasts of burden. We must act for ourselves, and work out our own salvation. (Hear and applause.) As division, however, had been the curse of the working people, union must now be their motto and their blessing. This must be their principle of action in future; namely, the man who will not work, does not deserve to eat. (Applause.) Mr. F. concluded by commending Co-operation as the only plan by which the working class could secure to themselves a fair remuneration for their labour, and the enjoyment of all their common rights.

MR. LOVETT begged to make a remark or two respecting the taxation of machinery. It had been said, the government would be partial if they did not tax machinery. So they were partial now; that

is, to their own interests. (Hear and laughter.) He objected to the taxation of machinery, for who would be benefitted by it? Why, those gentlemen! (holding up a well known paper, entitled "Nice Pickings," which excited considerable merriment.) Instead of proposing a tax, said Mr. Lovett, let us direct our powers against *this* machinery. (Hear and laughter.) Against those monsters who prey upon the vitals of society. (Cheers.) Instead of adding to their power, and another link to the chain which already bound us, let us try to break the chain asunder. (Cheers.) Instead of praying them to tax—in fact, instead of praying at all—(applause and laughter)—instead of praying, and bowing, and cringing, let us stand erect, conscious of our own worth, power, and importance in society, and say. "You who have constituted yourselves our rulers, we have created all the wealth by which you are surrounded, and if any are entitled to it, above the rest, it must surely be those who produce it. (Hear and applause.) What was tolerated through the blindness of our forefathers has been justified by antiquity; and power has usurped the place of liberty. We their sons have bowed to the yoke, and you have formed our minds, politically, and religiously as you thought proper; you endeavoured to keep us in a state of mental blindness, but in spite of your efforts to prevent it, our eyes are opened. (Hear and cheers.) In spite of gagging bills—in spite of attorneys-general, (hear and tremendous applause,) we see, we feel, and we are determined to endure the evils to which we have been subjected no longer. (Overwhelming applause.) As you have betrayed the trust reposed in you, and instead of protecting, have preyed upon, and devoured those who relied on you, henceforth we will manage for ourselves." (Loud applause.) Henceforth, we should tell them, "as you have caused us to become a by-word and a reproach among all nations, enjoy the honey we have gathered for you, but now we will gather for ourselves. (Hear and applause.) We will prevent you from obtaining any more." Thus we should act, instead of praying. He concluded by urging the necessity of unity and firm attachment to the principles of Co-operation.

MR. WATSON remarked, that it had been said, machinery had not benefitted mankind; a distinction should have been made: the rich had been benefitted, but at the expence of the working classes. They told us that machinery would enable the lower orders to possess new luxuries. How? because goods would become cheaper. What advantage was that to those who were thrown out of employment by the introduction of machinery, and reduced to a state of pauperism? (Hear.) Every person, indeed, receiving a fixed salary out of the taxes, or otherwise, would be benefitted in proportion to the reduction in the price of articles. Such was not the case, however, with working men. (Hear.) Allusion had been made to the "Times" newspaper. He had never yet heard that the introduction of machinery had caused a reduction in the price of that article. (Hear and laughter.) Was it sold for sixpence yet? (Laughter.) In all their arguments for the use of machinery, the "Times" seemed to have forgotten that point. (Hear and applause.) He believed that,

generally speaking, the old prices were kept up. There was a place called "Somerset House," where they made what were called "Stamps." There, they had kept up the spirit of the age, and had introduced machinery, because they found it cheaper than human labour, and yet they continued to make us pay fourpence out of every sevenpence for their stamp, although they manufactured it at a cheaper rate than formerly. (Hear and applause.) A writer in the "Kentish Chronicle," in alluding to passing events, had observed that the truth must be told—the working classes are reduced to that state of misery and degradation, that they will submit no longer. If government did not take some steps, the peasants of Kent, and, indeed of all England, would feel that they possessed the power of the people of France, and the peasantry of Belgium. (Tremendous applause.) He was glad to see public writers bold enough to declare the truth. The times were fearful, and yet favourable to the advancement of the cause of the people, and the introduction of a system (Co-operation) which would make them the envy and admiration of the world. (Hear.) Machinery was an important subject, in connection with the question before them, and fitter for study in the closet than for public discussion: yet the committee could not have done better than to bring it forward at the present moment. The right employment of machinery, he meant under Co-operative arrangements, was calculated to benefit the working classes, and to prove that the mechanics of England, both in manual labour and mental powers were able to take the lead of the whole world. (Applause.)

MR. TUCKER begged to state, that Mr. Owen had made a recent calculation, which went to shew that if the great landholders would give land to labourers, they would be enabled, under Co-operative arrangements so to cultivate them, as to give them nine-tenths of the produce in return, deriving from the other tenth sufficient to maintain themselves comfortably, while they would pour wealth so profusely upon the higher classes that they would become completely overwhelmed by it.

MR. ROSSER said, he rose in the spirit of Co-operation, which, while it deplored the evils existing in society, was anxious to bring about a change which would entail no evils upon any. He was induced to address them in consequence of the speaker who held up the paper ("Nice Pickings"), and drew forth, he feared, their disapprobation and disgust towards the individuals whose names were there inserted. Those men were to be pitied rather than condemned, for they were equally with the other classes of society the victims of a bad system. With all their wealth and luxuries they were not really happy. (Hear.) They were more entitled to commiseration than hate. That machinery was an evil, at present, no man could doubt, because it competed with human labour, and conquered it, and simply for this reason, because it was not so expensive. If a remedy were attempted it should be done by setting forth a correct statement of facts, in order to set right the public mind; with this view, he did not approve of those appeals to the passions, rather than to the mind; nor the neglect of inculcating those principles without

the influence of which man would still be the enemy of man. (Hear.) If such a state of things existed as in France, previous to the memorable three days, there might be cause for loud and unlimited appeals, but he trusted that the appeals here would be made to reason, and that the arm of reason, and the union of knowledge, not physical force, would achieve the conquest. (Hear.) A change violently effected might last for a few years, but the evils would return with double mischief. He would have a better watchword than "Swing," and a better union than that of mere discontent. (Hear.) Those men (pointing to "Nice Pickings") acted under the influence of the circumstances in which they were placed; from the nature of the stations and their education, they were as they were. They and we must remain the victims of a bad system, until error gave way to truth, and tyranny to liberty. He would have them, then, not attack men but measures. (Hear and applause.)

MR. LOVETT explained. He did not speak against the men, but against the *machinery*—the system. (Hear.) But he could not help thinking that the men supported the system. (Hear.) While they pitied the poor men under their present circumstances, (laughter) he thought it advisable to surround them with such circumstances as should compel them to become serviceable members of society. (Hear and applause.)

MR. FOSTER said, the last gentlemen but one who spoke, was an aristocrat, (laughter), and said different things in different assemblies.

The CHAIRMAN called Mr. Foster to order.

MR. FOSKETT said, he had heard Mr. Rosser speak at various meetings, and always found him consistent. (Hear and applause.)

MR. CLEAVE claimed a right as a member of the association to be heard. He did not quite agree with Mr. Rosser. He thought the honest indignation of Englishmen ought to be expressed both against men and measures. (Hear.) There were many philosophers in the country, but they all leaned one way. (Hear.) The men of Kent were not to have any pity, while Mr. R. kindly threw a shield around the creators of their woes. (Hear, hear.) If we were all equally victims to a bad system, both rich and poor, he would rather take the place of the rich, and have all the comfort and all the commiseration too. (Hear and laughter.) He agreed with Mr. R. that knowledge was power, and he proclaimed love to all mankind; but Mr. R. did so on one set of principles, and he on another. When there was such burning and swinging (laughter) it was time for the adoption of decisive measures. (Hear.) He believed the present state of things was owing to the apathy of the people. (Hear.) Mr. R. would inculcate quiescence. (No, no, from Mr. R.) Did they not know that within five miles of St. James's, several men died in ditches, and when they were dissected nought but grass was found in their stomachs! (Cries of shame.)

MR. ROSSER again presented himself to the meeting amidst great applause, and cries of "Question."

The CHAIRMAN having obtained a hearing for Mr. R., he proceeded to say, that after the manner in which he had been alluded to, he trusted he should be allowed to reply. He denied the charge of

inconsistency, and he knew there were many present, who could deny it for him. He had been called an aristocrat; the true meaning of the word, was the best person in the state; that would be very flattering to him; but, he was afraid it was not used in that sense, and in answer he would say, that it was his lot to work for his bread, though not in the capacity of a manual labourer. In principle also, he was no more an aristocrat than the gentleman who called him by that name. (Hear.)

Mr. HETHERINGTON thought, those persons had done very wrong, who had prayed for taxation on machinery. His friend (Mr. Lovett) seemed to have a great aversion to praying. (Laughter) He (Mr. H.) had not quite so much, for he had heard that praying was in some places done by machinery. (Renewed laughter.) They would soon hear, he supposed, of cast-iron parsons, preaching by steam. He had heard of a heathen tribe, who prayed by machinery. (Laughter.) They put their prayers into the machine, and then sat round it smoking and regaling themselves. (Laughter.) He should like such machinery, and such praying, too, as this. But to the point: if machinery were taxed, would it give more employment to the working classes? Who would have to pay the tax? The consumers. (Hear.) We already complained of the taxes on knowledge, and why desire more? As to machinery, if it were in the hands of the people, it would be a benefit, but while used only for the purposes of monopolists it was a curse to them. In answer to Mr. Rosser's observations, he would say, if the men were removed, the system would be annihilated. (Cries of no! no!) Did they ever hear of a bishop being converted? No: because there were thirty thousand reasons against it, in the shape of thirty thousand pounds. (Hear and laughter.) Those men should be surrounded by circumstances in which they could no longer exist in connexion with the present system. He agreed that intelligence must precede force, though he feared that force would be necessary. It must, however, be wielded by intelligent men, knowing what they wanted, and being determined to have it. Some reference had been made to the newspaper stamp duty; their worthy chairman had commenced a warfare that would end in the annihilation of that shameful impost. (Tremendous applause.) But it would be necessary that we should aid and assist him. (Hear and reiterated applause.) And if they proceeded only upon the great principles of truth, justice, and freedom, they must gain the victory. (Applause.) He called upon printers to Co-operate with them, and there would soon be works enough published to give them all employment. He concluded by saying, that the taxes upon knowledge, designed to keep them in ignorance and slavery, must and should be abolished. (Great applause.)

The CHAIRMAN put the resolution, which was carried unanimously. Another question remained for discussion; but it was agreed that it should be postponed until the next Monday evening.

Mr. ROSSER, in a complimentary speech, proposed a vote of thanks to the chairman, which was seconded, and carried by acclamation.

The CHAIRMAN returned thanks for the warm and generous manner

in which they had passed a vote of thanks to him, but which he could have wished had been dispensed with, because it seemed to imply that he had exceeded his duty, though he knew, that was not the case. Having expressed his attachment to the interests of the working classes, and to the cause of general liberty, he bade the meeting good night, amidst loud applause.

The meeting was very numerous and respectable.

ON THE FORMATION OF CHARACTER.

"The character of man is formed FOR, and not BY the individual."

ROBERT OWEN.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE MAGAZINE OF USEFUL KNOWLEDGE.

SIR,—The essential and fundamental principle of Co-operation, which you advocate as the basis upon which the system should be founded, must appear to all its friends, as the corner-stone of the building: viz., the improvement of the condition of the working classes, by the profitable employment of their own labour. This is the foundation which the working classes must first lay down, before they make any attempt at the formation of *character*, or the practice of those moral principles which are peculiar to the system. For, would it not be building on a sandy foundation, in teaching them those principles upon which they would have no opportunity of acting, under the present competitive system, and which would be destroyed in their minds, as soon as formed by coming in contact with old society? It would be only sowing good seed on stony ground, for although the mind be enlightened, the habits and conduct, and therefore the character, will remain unchanged, until men surround themselves by those circumstances, favourable to the practice and development of Co-operative principles. To require an individual to act on those principles, without placing him in such circumstances, would be reversing the principle laid down by Mr. Owen; the character of the individual would be formed *BY*, and not *FOR* him. The natural and philosophical way, is, on the contrary, so to change the external and physical circumstances, that the mental character shall naturally arise out of them. Nature in all her creations, whether in the material or animal world, operates by the same law, and we cannot do better than imitate her, in the formation of the character of man.

The working classes are those to whom Co-operation will be most beneficial, and by whom it must be first adopted. But how, in their present condition is it to be recommended to them, but by applying its principles to unite them for their mutual benefit, upon such an amount of capital or wealth, as they can collectively advance. Their gradual progress and success will stimulate them to greater exertions; and a closer union and mutual benefit will produce mutual confidence and love, and ultimately a mutual character among the members of such a union.

This is the only way in which the character can be formed *for* the individual, on Co-operative principles, by the working classes. The hope of improving their condition and circumstances is the only motive by which the great mass can ever be induced to practice Co-operation. It was upon this ground that Mr. Owen *first* presented Co-operation to the world, and it is to effect this object that the working classes are now exerting themselves. But Mr. Owen has now departed from his original course, and considers it indispensable that the character of individuals should be formed prior to their union, and hence, neither he nor his friends apply their minds, or their influence to assist the working classes in their struggles, to render successful their first efforts. They form a separate class, teaching metaphysical principles, and insisting that Co-operation cannot be carried into effect but by those who agree with

them, not only on these, but on religious, or anti-religious opinions, also. By this means, Mr. Owen is receding in his course; the working classes are advancing before him, and without him. He has injured the cause, and retarded the progress of his system, by stepping entirely out of his way, on a subject quite foreign to Co-operation, as well as to civil liberty, in his attack on christianity. It is with great pleasure, Mr. Editor, that I see you have commenced this Magazine, on the broad basis of Co-operation, embracing all parties, and urging them to unite, for the promotion of their mutual interest, and the improvement of their condition and circumstances; and I hope your exertions will induce Mr. Owen and his friends, to follow your example.

JAMES TUCKER.

LITERATURE.

The Family Library, No. 16. Letters on Demonology and Witchcraft, addressed to J. G. Lockhart, Esq. by Sir Walter Scott, Bart. Murray: London. p.p. 402. Price 5s.

Dark and humiliating, indeed, is the page of human history, which relates to the subjects of demonology and witchcraft. All that is degrading in superstition, and horrible in cruelty, will here find its counterpart, and no class of men can make their boast that their predecessors in society were free from the charge of having participated in these enormities. The great men, the wise men, and the good men; the ignoble, the illiterate, and the base, stand upon the same level in this respect. They were all so far the slaves of ignorance as to believe in the powers of sorcery and witchcraft, and to permit hundreds of their fellow creatures to be tortured, and sacrificed as the victims of their delusion. But, happily for us, this is now only matter of history. Generations have rolled by since the events we have referred to took place, and in the present day, individuals of all classes, from the prince to the peasant, are as unanimous in their disbelief, as their ancestors of two centuries ago were in their credulity. And to what are we to ascribe the pleasing change? To knowledge—to the general diffusion of useful knowledge. At first, its influence was confined to the classes of rank and learning, where alone it was cultivated; then it extended itself to the next in the scale of society, the possessors of mere wealth. At length, however, it has won its way to the great mass of the population, and the effect is what we have styled a thorough emancipation from the thralldom and guilt which a prevalent belief in demonology and witchcraft have uniformly produced.

And yet there are to be found some who object to the education of the people. Do these folks think that the power which has hitherto accompanied knowledge is exhausted?—that mankind have reached the limit of their acquirements?—that all further extension of knowledge is useless? If they do, perhaps they are consistent. But such is not our belief: we think that knowledge will yet achieve conquests, as great and glorious as any that we now enjoy; that mankind through its influence will be released from still further portions of bondage and iniquity; and that their deliverance from the galling yoke of demonology and witchcraft, will be almost lost sight of, in the superior freedom which is yet to be bestowed upon them. Thinking thus, we cannot do otherwise than rejoice in the continued extension of knowledge, and give our humble aid in the good work.

The volume before us is one of modest pretensions, but of admirable execution. Sir Walter says, in his introductory observations, "As my information is only miscellaneous, and makes no pretensions either to combat the systems of those by whom I am anticipated, in consideration of the subject, or to erect any new one of my own, my purpose is, after a general

account of demonology and witchcraft, to confine myself to narratives of remarkable cases, and to the observations which naturally and easily arise out of them." This purpose is accomplished in a series of ten letters, written in the author's best style, and studded with anecdotes and illustrations, such as no man but himself could have furnished. His stores seem to be inexhaustible.

NEGRO SLAVERY.

So the gude folks in Edinburgh have had a meeting anent the old hacknied subject—the abolition of slavery. One of the orators goes on thus:—"If one unhappy slave should be caught in his attempt to escape, while he had one foot on the soil of this country, and the other in the ocean, *if he could be supposed to be divided*, the one *half* would be that of a free man, entitled to all the rights, and privileges, and COMFORTS (*query?*) of British subjects, while the other (*half* we suppose,) would be liable to be forced back, chained, scourged, and branded"!!!

This amiable method of *dividing* the poor negroes is certainly *unique* in its kind; but *query*, as we have said before, which of the two *halves* would fare the best: the British *half*, or the West Indian *half*? We have all along understood, that is to say, if we can pretend to common understanding, that our friends the negroes, are better fed, better clothed, better housed, and better taken care of, in every respect, than falls to the lot of our unfortunate labouring population in Great Britain and Ireland; at least we are warranted in believing so, if the report of the evidence before the House of Commons be correct, to say nothing of the accounts given by many able writers upon the subject. And to talk of the *comforts*, too, which the people here enjoy! Really this is too bad. But perhaps we are mistaken; it is the *comforts* of the people of Scotland, we opine, that is pointed at. This is a sad mistake indeed, for we have all along been given to understand that our northern friends were just as badly off as their brethren in England and Ireland. But this is trifling with the subject. Every body knows that the distresses of the people of this country have reached their acme, and something *must* be done, and that speedily too, or we shall have revolution, with all its attendant horrors, amongst us. Therefore, while we are in this state, surely it is unwise, impolitic, nay, absurd, to think of travelling across the Atlantic in search of abuses to reform.

And the ladies, too; nothing will suit our "brother Scots," but they must have a committee of ladies upon this anti-slavery business. This is a shameless and gross imposition, upon the most tender hearts that ever graced the northern metropolis; inasmuch as it tends to gloss over, and completely throw into the shade, all the misery, distress—nay, *slavery*, which, God knows! too much abound at home. We hope our northern female friends will look better into the subject, and resolve, one and all, not to stir a peg in the business, until they have first secured the emancipation of their brothers and sisters nearer their doors; that done, we will join them one and all, in putting an end to slavery abroad.

It is not a little strange, to see men of influence—nay, ministers of the gospel—taking part in this transaction, when they, from their situation in life, ought to know better how to direct their talents and their energies, to reform abuses at home; to feed the hungry, to clothe the naked, and to shelter the defenceless, as they profess to do, and as it is their duty to do, previous to going elsewhere to fish for something to reform. It is like going the nearest way to India, by first sailing across the Atlantic.

Let us hear no more of this twaddle, until something is done, and effectually done, for the poor starving thousands of our fellow-men in this country, who ought to be, our first care.

WM. M'DIARMID.

VARIETIES.

The Truck System.—This injurious practice has extended into Worcester, and is made a severe and unjustifiable tax upon the poor female working glovers, whose scanty earnings of 5s., 6s., or 7s., a week at most, can ill afford the exorbitant addition of 20 or 30 per cent. upon the necessities of life, bread, butter, cheese, bacon, or whatever else it is known these poor women must generally require in the way of subsistence. The most shameless imposition, however, is a charge upon each of them of 3d. per week for the use of a sewing machine, which they are compelled to hire, as they are refused employment if they procure one for themselves. This is a levy from them of 13s. per annum for the hire of a machine which originally cost about 12s., and the yearly wear and tear of which scarcely amounts to 8d. Should any frugal individual get a machine of her own, she is always informed that there is no work for her. It may be doubted whether, as the law at present exists, the magistracy can remedy this indefensible species of oppression; but at all events, it is in their power to expose and discountenance it. The general frown of authority amounts to something, and that at least can, and ought to be afforded.

Points of Honour.—Colonel Montgomery was shot in a duel about a dog, captain Ramsay in one about a servant, Mr. Fetherstone in one about a recruit, Sterne's father in one about a goose, and another gentleman in one about an "acre of anchovies." One officer was challenged for merely asking his opponent to enjoy a second goblet, and another was compelled to fight about a pinch of snuff; general Barry was challenged by a captain Smith, for declining a glass of wine with him after dinner in a steam-boat, although the general had pleaded in excuse, that wine invariably made his stomach sick at sea.

The Spitalfields Weavers.—Her Majesty has desired that patterns of the richest and most beautiful silks, of the manufacture of Spitalfields, should be forwarded to Saint James's Palace, in order that her majesty may select a dress to appear in at the grand civic festival, on the 9th of November. The message has given the greatest joy to the poor weavers, who anticipate the most favorable results from the example set by her

majesty. On Saturday, a great number of patterns were left at Saint James's Palace, and it is intended, when the royal selection is made, to weave a very rich article, and have it in readiness in sufficient time. At a meeting of the weavers on Saturday night, great complaints were made of the injury done to the silk trade of this country by foreign competition, and it was stated that there were imported into this country foreign wrought silks, under the denomination of gros de Naples, velvets, satins, gauzes, and crapes, in the year 1827—72,924 lbs. in 1828—104,800 lbs.; and in 1829—121,193 lbs. Showing an increase of the two last years beyond the first of 48,269 lbs. It was also stated, that there was a pattern in preparation for her majesty, of a superior description of silk and work, plated with silver, which would be ready to be presented on her majesty's arrival in town.

Flogging in the Army.—The public papers have lately been almost filled by articles on the barbarous practice of flogging in the army. Surely this should interest all the humane people of the empire. We have laws to prevent cruelty to animals. The legislature has passed a strong resolution against flogging negroes; it has put down bull baiting and cock fighting; it sets its face against boxing and overloading stage coaches, because it will prevent cruelty and injury to life and limb; and yet it authorizes the flogging of soldiers and sailors in the unmerciful manner brought under notice. Perhaps that may have its advantages. It must disgust the people with the service and make them unwilling to support a system of which they are evidently the most suffering victims.

"Slaves fight for what were better cast away—

The cat that flogs 'em and a tyrant's sway."

Who, then, under such a system, would be a soldier? None but men of ruined character and lost fortunes. Self-interest, therefore, not less than humanity, requires the people to say that an end must be put to this cruelty, for its obvious effect is to place arms in the hands of the most vile and worthless, and to entrust the public defence to those who may be supposed to have no interest in the public welfare.

MAGAZINE OF USEFUL KNOWLEDGE;
POETRY.

POETICAL EPISTLE

FROM JOHN TO HIS COUSIN IN THE COUNTRY.

Too long have we lived, and its time, my dear *cousin*,
We quit where we're more than thirteen to the dozen.
Friend MALTHUS prescribes, but how silly his preaching,
And Economists write, but in vain is their teaching,
While births so exceed, and occasion such trouble,
If men will be born, and the women bear, double.
Not sufficient when single, and little at ease.
We needs must *throw doublets*—import *Siamese*.
No harm by the heads I expect to be done,
For proverbial *two* heads are better than one,
But *two* stomachs, as matters are going just now,
Is just what is likely to kick up a row.
Corporations a nuisance we deem on the whole,
At least *Corporations* should always be *sole*.
More head is redeeming, for great is the call,
But *two stomachs* in chief is the devil and all.
For public concerns, Coz, these tidings are sad,
But *Domestic* remain, which will drive you quite mad.
For a female, a duplex exists*, they declare,
With two heads, and with every thing else too, *en pair*.
Oh! well might our SHAKESPEARE, prophetic, cry "*Double*,"
And add to his "*double*" the "*toil*" and the "*trouble*;"
For the world is too small, if these wonders increase—
Only think of *two tongues*!—and bid farewell to peace!

* This monster is dead—all the papers say so—
But she did not die *single*, we all of us know.

LOVE'S PHILOSOPHY.

The fountains mingle with the river,
And the rivers with the ocean,
The winds of heaven mix for ever
With a sweet emotion;
Nothing in the world is single;
All things by a law divine
In one another's being mingle—
Why not I with thine?

See the mountains kiss high heaven,
And the waves clasp one another;
No sister flower would be forgiven
If it disdained its brother:
And the sunlight clasps the earth,
And the moonbeams kiss the sea,
What are all these kissings worth,
If thou kiss not me?

SHELLY.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

We beg to inform *INQUIRUS*, that we inserted the extract to which his letter refers, solely because we desired to give wider currency to a sentiment which ought to be deeply engraven on the heart of all. From this he will see, that we are not opposed to Sir P. Sidney, although we are to Mr. Owen, upon the subject of human opinion. We will endeavour to insert the letter of *INQUIRUS* in our next, accompanied by some remarks.

We fear the *Co-operator's* song is hardly fit to meet the public eye; it is, however, susceptible of emendation.

Several other Correspondents must excuse us from noticing, otherwise than thus, their contributions.

C. STRANGE, 21, Paternoster Row. Published once a fortnight; and sold by all Booksellers, and Co-operative Storekeepers.